

DV

**Desert Voice Magazine**  
Serving U.S. and Coalition Forces in Kuwait

January 24, 2007



# **Training for Disaster**

**Military leaders receive advanced counter-insurgency training in Kuwait**

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Smoke rises from the desert during improvised explosive device training on Camp Buehring

Photo by Spc. Debrah A. Robertson

## From the Top

### Engaging media is a reality for information war

*"The tongue is mightier than the blade."  
– Greek poet Euripides, 484 BC – 406 BC*

In the Global War on Terror, Euripides had it right, information is almost as powerful as bullets and roadside bombs. Winning the war is as much about influencing people and earning their trust and confidence as it is about winning tactical battles on the ground.

Television, newspapers and the Internet are critical operational and strategic battlefields as the streets of Baghdad are the tactical battlefields.

Crucial to our overall success is the need to fight misinformation, complacency and ignorance. Terrorists use the media to get attention to further their cause -- and it does not need to be factual, just fast. Putting out the right information counters the propaganda and aids in our fight. Aggressively engaging the public and the media is one way to counter this enemy.

Brig. Gen. Anthony Cucolo, the Army's chief of public affairs, addressed a group of Army public affairs officers soon after he took the position last year. His mandate was simple.

"Take the gloves off and engage in your best, well-modulated and carefully thought-out professional communication," said Cucolo.

Engaging the media is not left only to our public affairs professionals or to Generals. Each of our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen are the credentials of our Armed Forces. When you engage television, newspapers and radio stations in the States, you are not only highlighting

the unique duties you perform, but more importantly, you bring a face to the war, giving the public a glimpse of the human dimension to the tremendous efforts that go on each and every day in our area of operations.

In the month of December, troops in Kuwait conducted more than 40 interviews with newspapers, television and radio stations across the United States. So far in January, 16 interviews have been conducted.

These interviews, facilitated by our public affairs professionals, were aired from Honolulu, Hawaii, to Orlando, Florida, and from

Midland, Texas, to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Our servicemembers told their story to audiences in the millions in 20 states.

There is no better or more credible representative for the U.S. military than the servicemember. When you speak to a media representative, you are serving as an ambassador of your family, your unit, your service and America.

Media relations are an important aspect of sustaining the support of the American people. The public has a right to know and we have an obligation to assist in telling them our story.

On any given day, there are two dozen civilian media representatives embedded with units in the AOR. So I urge each of you to work with your unit's Public Affairs Officers. The best story is your own story -- so staying in your lane talking about your job, your unit, your experiences and your contributions to the ongoing war serves you, the public's right to know and America's interest.



**Third Army Commanding General  
Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb**

**DV**  
**Desert Voice  
Magazine**

Volume 28, Issue 30

The Desert Voice is an authorized publication for members of the Department of Defense. Contents of the Desert Voice are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government or Department of the Army. The editorial content of this publication is the responsibility of the Third Army Public Affairs Office. This newspaper is published by Al-Qabandi United, a private firm, which is not affiliated with Third U.S. Army. All copy will be edited. The Desert Voice is produced weekly by the 40th Public Affairs Detachment. Find us online at [www.arcent.army.mil](http://www.arcent.army.mil).

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# First sergeant pedals for 'Triple Deuce'



Story and photos by  
**Capt. Mike Wallace**  
**377<sup>th</sup> TSC PAO (Forward)**

It's a demanding job being an Army first sergeant, with all the work associated in supervising Soldiers. The job includes ensuring Soldiers are well-trained and cared for – mothering – in a way.

It is a challenge for just about anyone, but for 1st Sgt. Connie Brannock of 222nd Transportation Company, stationed at Camp Virginia, Kuwait, this life is as rewarding as anything she has experienced in the past.

"I'm old enough to be most of the Soldiers' mom in this unit," Brannock said, admitting that it's tough to keep her maternal instincts in check. "A lot of my Soldiers view me as their substitute 'mom,' but I have to be fair and keep my discipline and control of the unit to the highest level."

Brannock, who is easily identified by her trademark bicycle she uses to transport herself from one area of the company to the other—checking on issues that pop up daily for a first sergeant. Her high energy and enthusiasm is usually associated with a younger person.

She joined the Arizona National Guard in 1990, one week before she turned 35, leaving behind a life of a recording artist where she had a recording contract with MCA records. She entered a world where she was the oldest person in her basic training class and in many of her subsequent military classes. But this never slowed her down, she said. The bicycle enthusiast didn't mind a different life, one that had changed from moving around sound amplifiers while wearing high heels to running a course in combat boots.

"I would rather travel on two wheels than anything else," she said, noting that she has successfully combined her two loves—being the first sergeant and pedaling on two wheels.

Before her second deployment to Southwest Asia, Brannock commuted to work almost every day in a seven mile round trip on her preferred

single speed bicycle. She has even competed in six triathlons and a biathlon, where she finished with very respectful times using her 'full-throttle waddle.'

"I've been blessed with good health and have always been active, even before I joined the Arizona National Guard," Brannock said.

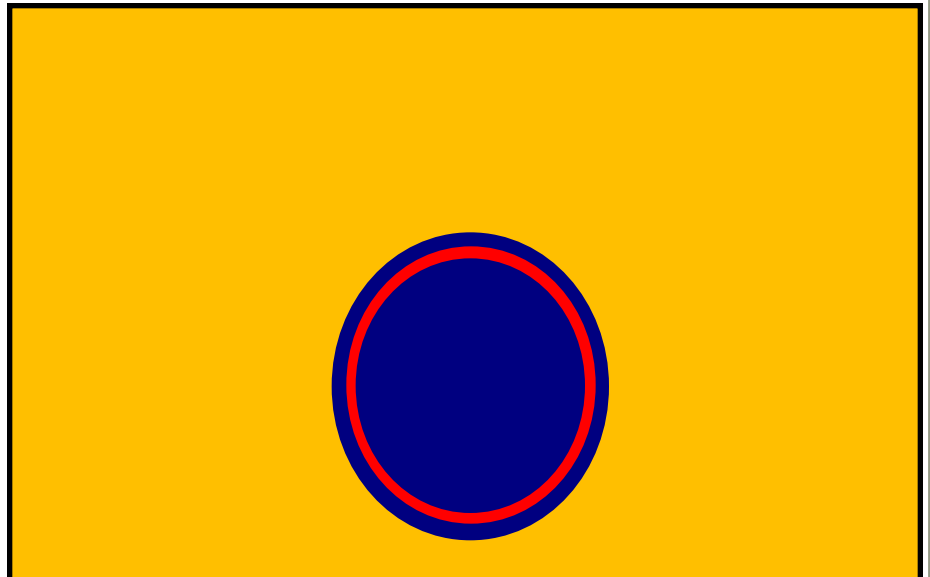
Staying physically fit is one of the top priorities for herself and her Soldiers, she said. She has never scored below 262 on her physical fitness test [her all-time high was 372] and credits her love of biking to her good health. Soldiers have to stay fit, to stay physically and mentally prepared for their tasks, she said.

She acknowledges there have been many changes in the military since she joined—except for one thing.

"You have to treat everyone with respect," she said. "Never disregard their basic humanity and they will try harder for you. They will strive to perfect themselves when they see that you really do care about them and the unit."

**(Top left)** 1st Sgt. Connie Brannock rides around Camp Virginia on a bicycle, her usual mode of transportation.

1st Sgt. Connie Brannock, who joined the military at 34 years old, says staying fit is one of the biggest priorities for herself and her Soldiers.





**Harvey Gough** (center), with his camouflage chef's hat, and his friend **Tony Booth** (left) serve a line of hungry Soldiers at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Jan. 15.

# Texas Treat

Story and Photos by  
**Sgt. Thomas L. Day**  
Desert Voice Staff Writer

## Dallas natives throw barbeque for deployed Soldiers at Camp Arifjan

**H**arvey Gough, owner of a Dallas hamburger restaurant chain, came to Kuwait to do both of his life's professions. "I've had two jobs in my life," said Gough, a retired Army Reservist, "selling burgers and [serving] in the military."

On Jan. 15, Gough and seven of his friends served more than one

hundred Soldiers deployed with Third Army/U.S. Army Central. Nobody brought a cash register.

Gough and his friends call themselves "Steak Team Mission." This is their third trip overseas in the last five years, including a stop Jan. 14 to Camp Bucca, Iraq.

For this "mission," Gough and his friends brought 2,000 steaks

and 250 hamburgers. "We're just a little group of guys who pool our resources and get things together," said Tony Booth, a Dallas native who has joined Gough for all three trips. "It's just to show our appreciation for you troops who are here doing your jobs."

Gough is the main financier for the barbeque. His franchise,



Guff's Hamburgers [he spells his restaurant name differently than his own last name], provides the food and the grill. While some donations have come from Dallas companies for previous trips [including the Dallas Cowboys], Gough and his friends cover most of the bill.

The cost of just moving the food and equipment into theater, according to Booth, ran more than \$1,000.

Nobody seems to mind the expenses. On his way out of Camp Bucca, Gough was handed a note from Kyle Harmon, a contracted civilian from the Dallas suburb of Richardson.

"I have been working with the Army for three years now. I have been at this base since it was nothing but tents and baby wipes. Tonight's meal is without a doubt the highlight of my time here. Thank you for what you have done!"

The group has a website, [www.steakteammission.org](http://www.steakteammission.org), for anyone interested in more information.

## The Steak Team Mission (as posted on [SteakTeamMission.org](http://SteakTeamMission.org))

### I. Situation:

#### A. Friendly Forces:

1. Steak Team Mission: A group of Dallas-based restaurateurs and supporters capable of providing food and supplies for soldiers' benefit.

2. Steak Team Mission: A small team, some of whom are veterans, experienced and prepared to deploy to serve a home-cooked meal for soldiers anywhere any time....

#### B. Enemy Forces:

1. Bureaucrats: some folks may think this idea is unconventional, and they are right.

### II. Mission:

Steak Team Mission deploys to prepare and serve up to 2,000 steak dinners with all complements to soldiers in harm's way to a remote, hazardous objective at a date and location determined by U S Army.

### III. Concept of the Operation:

A. Commander's Intent: Do something kind for soldiers.

B. Scheme of Maneuver: Steak Team Mission will go anywhere by any means and would prefer to go where it is worst for soldiers.

C. Mission of Subordinate Elements: Food benefactors will supply Steak Team Mission with all Class I (food) for mission.

D. Coordinating Instructions: Steak Team Mission needs approval and transportation support to get from home to objective and back.

### IV. Service & Supply:

A. Steak Team Mission can supply itself.



**Booth** (left) is on his third trip to the Middle East, serving on the Steak Team Mission board of directors since the group's first trip in 2002.



# EST 2000: Engagement Skills Trainer A virtual look at real combat

Story and Photos by  
**Sgt. Thomas L. Day**  
*Desert Voice Staff Writer*

Lt. Col. Paul Driscoll and four of his Soldiers were given a mission Jan. 16. “Time-sensitive intelligence” told them where and when a group of insurgents would be meeting. Iraqi police would be joining the fight.

Driscoll took the .50 caliber machine gun; his soldiers carried M-16 rifles – all weapons connected into an interactive system, like a video game. The movie-theatre sized screen showed the scenario through a point-of-view shot.

The EST 2000 at Camp Buehring, the most recent upgrade to the Engagement Skills Trainer, took

Driscoll and his troops to the location. This was not a real operation, but it’s a dynamic virtual test of what the Soldiers will likely begin seeing in just a few short weeks.

After the Iraqi police broke down the door, the team entered the room. Master Sgt. Jimmy Caldwell, the EST 2000 noncommissioned officer





**(Top)** A Soldier prepares for the next scenario to begin while training on the Engagement Skills Trainer 2000, a visual training device that not only improves servicemembers' marksmanship skills, but also offers real-life combat scenarios to enhance the trainees' battlefield awareness.  
**(Left)** Soldiers scan their sectors during training on the Engagment Skills Trainer 2000, Jan. 16, on Camp Buehring. Third Army/U.S. Army Central uses the training instrument in Kuwait so troops can hone their awareness on the battlefield before heading into Iraq.

# Trainer nbat

in charge, coached Driscoll and his team through the operation. "We got weapons all over the place within arms reach...does anyone here read minds?"

This particular training test was geared toward what Caldwell called "tactical patience."

"Laws of warfare and the rules of engagement apply at all times," Caldwell told the team.

Driscoll, who will be a National Internal Police Training chief once he arrives in Iraq, added another

variable for his Soldiers: "Nobody shoot the IPs," referring to the Iraqi Police.

As soon as an insurgent picked up an AK-47 on a nearby table, Driscoll and his Soldiers reacted. Then, the scenario stopped and the inside lights turned on.

Driscoll and his Soldiers took a step back and watched the replay. The engagement area then started decorating itself with green, yellow and red dots. Missed shots are marked green, shots that wounded the targets are marked yellow and red dots mark hit-and-kill shots.

The final tally: seven lethal hits,

zero misses. Driscoll's team passed the training test with a 100 percent score.

"As you progress in a counterinsurgency campaign, the escalation of force and minimizing collateral damage takes on more importance, particularly if you're in an urban environment," Driscoll said afterward. "You're not seeing a whole lot of artillery in Baghdad."

Driscoll had his Soldiers go through a similar EST system at Fort Riley. "They're very helpful," he said. "The weapons identify which lane and you can see in the replay which weapon fired on what target."



Inset: Simon Matthews, an instructor for the Battle Staff Training Seminar given at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, uses classroom discussion to exchange ideas and solutions for Iraq's most common killer, IEDs.

Above: IED Lane Training at Camp Buehring gives troops a basic understanding of what to expect on the roads of Iraq. Battle Staff training expands on these basic concepts.

# Training for Disas

Story and Photos by

**Spc. Debrah Robertson**  
Desert Voice Staff Writer

**T**he warfighter is maneuvering the streets of Iraq, trying to decide whether or not that chunk of concrete on the roadside is an improvised explosive device, but do they have time to think about the logistics behind these deadly devices?

The Counter-Improvised Explosive Device/Counterinsurgency (COIN) Battle Staff Training Seminar, held almost daily at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, not only has senior noncommissioned officers and officers asking these questions, but answering them as well.

Who dug the hole to place the IED? Who set the fuse? Who scouted the location? And, more importantly, why?

The seminar, set in a college-like

atmosphere, provides information on the latest trends in Iraq to brigade and battalion battle staffs before they move their units up north.

Battle Staff focuses on the whole system behind an IED, said Maj. Charles Brown, Third Army/ U.S. Army Central C-3 Training-Forward collective trainer. It teaches leaders to ask how each step of setting an IED was carried out and why the individual involved participated in the terrorist act.

"You never think about what's left of the bomb," said Brown of the complicated system of individuals who bring about the birth of an IED.

"To defeat [the insurgents], we have to have an understanding of the operational environment," said Simon Matthews, a COIN instructor with MPRI. "It's a tough environment [the troops] are going

into."

"The training provides clarity on who the actors of the battlefield are," said Matthews.

Although he has been deployed to Iraq before, Sgt. 1st Class James Taylor, the operations noncommissioned officer for the 101st Field Support Battalion, 1st Infantry Division, said the training brought him "up to speed" on the current relationships of the different tribes in Iraq.

He said the training brought to light some of the reasons tribesman help insurgents with their quest to harm American and allied forces.

This includes who is sympathizing with insurgents, which tribes are Sunni or Shiite and what events may have occurred that would lead a group to help plant an IED, such as what they may perceive as an injustice done to them by a Soldier.





# ster **Battle Staffs train for a common killer in Iraq: IEDs**

“This training will help not only us, but those on future deployments,” said Taylor, who plans to use the training to help build a rapport with the Iraqi’s he may encounter during his missions off base in Iraq.

Understanding where they are coming from and why they do the things they do can help troops counter their attempts to do them harm.

Using the example of a young man digging a hole for an IED so that he can receive money to feed his family, Matthews demonstrates to his class the importance of knowing the people they encounter. He tells his class that by providing bread to the man, he may decide not to dig the hole, not

only because he is no longer as desperate to provide food that day but because the servicemember has created a rapport with him. The man does not want to harm the person who helped him.

Thinking outside the box is the Bat-

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**“You never know what’s left of the bomb.”**

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Maj. Charles Brown, Third Army/  
U.S. Army Central

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tle Staff Training Seminar’s trademark.

Matthews and his fellow instructors teach servicemem-

bers from multiple military branches to look beyond the situation at hand and ask why.

If the leaders of the warfighters know why an event will occur, then they can better direct their troops on the appropriate actions to take to counter the event

before lives are lost, said Matthews. Whether by deciding the amount of force to use during a heated confrontation with an Iraqi civilian or how to react to the graciousness of an Iraqi host, the training helps breach these scenerios.

“You can’t just shoot into a crowd and kill innocents,” said Brown.

Such actions give civilians motivation for helping the insurgency, said Matthews.

“You have to understand the environment,” he continued.

“Every innocent killed creates 10 insurgents who want revenge,” said Brown.

The training teaches leaders to think beyond the battlefield and use countermeasures to stop civilians from becoming insurgents before they have taken lives.

# Tune-d up:

## Soldier carries musical passion into desert

**Spc. Debrah A. Robertson**  
**Desert Voice Assistant Editor**

**J**oining the military to make a difference was Spc. Tim Sox's biggest priority as a young man in high school.

"It's all I wanted to do," said Sox, an administrative specialist with the Aviation Task Force Kuwait, 1st Battalion, 111th Aviation Regiment General Support Aviation Battalion, supporting Third Army/U.S. Army Central. "I wanted to do something that meant something."

Although just being in the National Guard was enough to satisfy him after experiencing the shock and grief following the Sept. 11 attacks, Sox, a Jacksonville, Fla., native, dreams of putting his other talent to work—singing.

"I love singing," he said. "I can't ever stop singing."

"He sings along with everything," said Maj. Charlie Vanzant, the S-1 officer of the 1st Battalion, about Sox's office serenades.

Since he was 3-years-old, Sox has sang. His entire family loves making

music.

Now he and Furry get calls to perform their talents before audiences. Performing the harmony portion of the duet, Sox, with his new partner, began to sing at National Guard conferences throughout Florida.

"We sang the National Anthem at the [Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States], the biggest conference for enlisted members of the National Guard," said Sox proudly.

Then, in September, Sox decided to try his luck and talent at Military Idol, a military version of the popular television show. Held at Fort Sill, Okla., where the 111th were training for their deployment to Kuwait, the competition tested Sox's vocal abilities, and he came out shining.

Sox put all of his heart into the performances, said Vanzant. Singing the songs of his favorite musicians, Sox aced "Amazed" by Lone Star and won the favors of both the audience and the judges when he sang "God Bless the U.S.A" by Lee Greenwood.

Then, taking a key from his ability to adapt to new songs on the fly, Sox tried Los Lonely Boys' "Heaven" as his final song after only a day or so of practice.

During the performance Sox forgot the words halfway through the song, placing him as second, but he braved his embarrassment to come back on stage to finish it at the end of the competition.

"You should have sung a song you knew," the judges told Sox.

"I learned humility there," he said. Not giving up on his dream, Sox practices his singing ability whenever the chance arises and combines it with his love of the military whenever he can perform as a Soldier.



*Courtesy photo*

Spc. Tim Sox, an Aviation Task Force Kuwait, 1st Battalion, 111th Aviation Regiment General Support Aviation Battalion Soldier, puts his musical talent to the test by performing in a Military Idol Competition at Fort Sill, Okla., in Sept. He finished second at Fort Sill.



# Bright reflections



Photo by Spc. Debrah A. Robertson

Participants in the Camp Arifjan Martin Luther King, Jr., 5K run take off in the early morning with their reflective belts shining.

## Camp Arifjan Martin Luther King, Jr., 5K run

Male	Top finishers	Female
<b>WALK</b> <b>40 and over</b> -- Prenell Mabry: 34:19 <b>39 and under</b> -- Deandre Kentle: 34:29		
<b>RUN</b> <b>50 and over</b> -- Jackie Lavato: 20:32 <b>40-49</b> -- Ric Tinney: 17:59 <b>30-39</b> -- Jeff Clemmons: 16:08 <b>29 and under</b> -- Chris Massey: 17:30		
<b>WALK</b> <b>40 and over</b> -- Jean Mott: 34:55 <b>39 and under</b> -- Erica Polite: 34:06		
<b>RUN</b> <b>50 and over</b> -- Teralene Westfield: 29:05 <b>40-49</b> -- Karen Phelps: 20:53 <b>30-39</b> -- Rachel Rosenbaum: 20:29 <b>29 and under</b> -- Maria Tejada: 22:00		

## Hometown Hero



**Pfc. Andrew Mellon, Health Care Specialist, 407th Forward Support Battalion**

Mellon's job as a combat medic is important because he is essential to maintaining the health of all the other Soldiers in his unit.

Mellon talks about what he misses about his hometown of Austin, Texas

"All the festivals that occur almost monthly, including the Bob Marley Festival, Austin Music Festival and Eeyore's Birthday."

## Just One Question...

**How's your New Year's resolution holding up?**



**"A lot better if I wasn't drinking Starbucks' coffee."**  
*His resolution was to eat healthier.*

2nd Lt. Jordon Tilleson  
 1-121 Field Artillery Regt. (SECFOR)  
 Platoon Leader  
 Brookfield, Wisc.



**"Well, I have been able to replace all bad words with not-so-bad words, so it's going good."**

Pfc. Luisa Oliver  
 Motor Transport Operator  
 96th Transportation Company  
 Oakland, Calif.



**"My goal was to not get blown up or shot. It has been going well for me."**

Pfc. Joshua Unfred  
 Motor Transport Operator  
 96th Transportation Company  
 Lawrence, Kan.



**"My resolution was not to make any resolutions, and so far I'm doing just fine."**

Lt. Cmdr. Tom Vaughn  
 Combined Maintenance and Logistics  
 Naval Coastal Warfare Squadron 34  
 San Pedro, Calif.



**"Great! I have not had a drink of alcohol. How much better can it get?"**

Pfc. Brandy Melton  
 Motor Transport Operator  
 96th Transportation Company  
 Columbia, Mo.



# Soldiers, Marines practice marksmanship in Djibouti



*Photos by Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Eric A. Clement*



**(Top)** Army National Guardsman Sgt. Mijung Kim of Team Charlie, 1st Battalion, 294th Infantry Regiment, uses a rifle scope to line up a target 300 meters away during joint training with the Marine Corps' 5th Provisional Security Company at a training site in Arta, Djibouti, recently. Team Charlie provides military-to-military training for servicemembers in the Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa area of operations.

**(Top left)** United States Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Thomas Campbell, a Birmingham, Ala., native with the 5th Provisional Security Company, sets up to fire an M-14 rifle during joint training in Arta, Djibouti.

**(Below)** Army National Guardsman Sgt. Mijung Kim, a native of Harmon, Guam, gives advice to Marine Corps Sgt. John Rheuby, from Hueytown Ala., as Rheuby trains on an M-24 rifle during training Arta, Djibouti, recently.

